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ABSTRACT

Vocational education in this decade must be conceptualized as life-long career development for every person who can profit from such a program. A framework for a career education system must be provided that will introduce the world of careers, provide exploration, guidance, counseling, provide specific skills, provide pre-technical and more technical education, and upgrade and retrain throughout adult hood. Objectives of vocational career development and the goals of vocational education are identified. Upon these, proposed elements of a career education model are stated. Some of these components are: (1) Career education will replace general education, (2) Priority will be given to special target groups, (3) Career education will begin in the elementary grades and continue through life, (4) Job placement and followup will be a continuous school function, and (5) Effective and continuous evaluation is required. To effect this system, the present vocational education delivery system must be modified. (GEB)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE 1970's

Conference Discussion Paper

Bureau of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education
Division of Vocational and Technical Education
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Vocational Education for the 1970's was prepared to stimulate discussion about a career education program within our public schools. The U.S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. Sidney P. Marland, Jr., recently said:

> "I propose that a universal goal of American Education, starting now, be this: that every young person completing our school program at grade 12 be ready to enter higher education or to enter useful and rewarding employment."

We believe it is time to take the initiative in moving toward a career education program that will be responsive to the needs of all our people; one that will give each child, youth, and adult assistance in knowing about and preparing for careers. Above all, every individual must be afforded opportunities to exercise personal options concerning employment and further education throughout life. What programs are necessary in our schools? How can community resources be fully utilized in career education? Nationwide discussion is needed to help motivate the instituting of career education in local school systems.

Although many persons have made valuable contributions to this paper, the principal effort was made by Dwight R. Crum, Deputy Director of the Division. Please let us know how this effort may be improved.

Edwin L. Rumpf, Director
Division of Vocational and
Technical Education
U.S. Office of Education

March 2, 1971

Division of Vocational
and Technical Education
CONFERENCE DISCUSSION PAPER

Vocational Education for the 1970's

Vocational education in this decade must be conceptualized as life-long career development for every person who can profit from such a program. Historically, the public concept of vocational education has been the acquisition of specific skills by youth and adults for entry jobs. Other concepts emerged over the years but they were ancillary to the limitations of the anachronistic specific skills philosophy. During the past decade, vocational educators realized that more sophisticated and significant socio-economic concepts lay within the ambit of their responsibilities. The need to prepare our more disadvantaged citizenry to move from the frustration of poverty and unemployment through social mobility and to meaningful employment has evolved as a major responsibility of vocational educators. The economic role to provide qualified manpower demanded by our rapidly changing and complex technology has been intensified. Commensurate with this economic role is a need to accelerate post-secondary technical education programs.

Building on these concepts of specific skills training, of socio-economic accountability in meeting employment needs, and a massive expansion of post-secondary programs, vocational education must now provide the frame-work for a career education system that will: (1) introduce the elementary school child to the world of careers; (2) provide exploration, guidance and counselling for career choices throughout elementary and secondary education; (3) provide specific skills training, job clusters skills, or pre-technical education at the secondary level; (4) provide pre-technical

and significantly more technical education at the secondary and post-secondary levels; and (5) provide upgrading and retraining opportunities throughout adulthood. Both the schools and private industry will have greater responsibilities for high quality, relevant instruction for guidance counselling, and job placement, and follow-up in career education.

Crucial to vocational education career development is program flexibility that will provide multiple options for youth and adults to make career choices and changes.

I. Objectives of Vocational Career Development

1. To provide every young person who completes high school with a salable skill and assured entry to further education or training.
2. To provide those students who leave high school before graduating with a salable skill and re-entry opportunities into education or training.
3. To provide career orientation starting in kindergarten and guidance, counselling, and placement services to all students at all levels of education to assist them in career choices in making the transition from school to work, job advancement, and in making job changes.
4. To assure every person the opportunity to obtain career-related skills throughout life, within or outside of schools, with employers assuming a greater role.
5. To emphasize and enlarge post-secondary and adult vocational and technical education programs, including pre-technical programs

for the academically handicapped, so that a much higher proportion of specific skills training will occur at the post-secondary level.

6. To assure that every individual is prepared by education, regardless of curriculum, to lead a productive and self-fulfilling life.

II. Vocational Education Platform (Goals)

1. Vocational education must become part of the educational experience of all people. Vocational education is serving less than 20 percent of the secondary school population in specific skills training, while 80 percent of our youth do not graduate from college. All students, whether in general education, vocational, or in college prep curricula, need salable job skills. The unemployment rate among general secondary education graduates is over three times higher than vocational education graduates. The unemployment rate among minority youth is many times that of the national unemployment rate. The post-secondary program is serving only a small fraction of the need at that level. More important, however, are the vocational education and employment needs of inner-city residents and the poverty stricken residents of isolated rural areas and various minority groups, as well as the multitude of blue collar workers families. Vocational education must reach all of these target groups in this decade.

2. Vocational education must be more responsive to the Nation's present and future employment needs. Massive vocational education

output is needed in technical, service, health, environmental, construction, and other kinds of employment where predicted manpower shortages exist. Vocational education must be a viable force in creating change in the nation's economy by being the foremost provider of qualified manpower for new and emerging occupations.

3. Private schools and private industry must be an integral part of career education. This goal conceives the community as a laboratory in all facets of career development. Private schools must participate in specific skills training. Private industry and other employers must be an active participant in instructional design, skill training and related educational components, guidance counselling, and placement. The facilities and equipment of private industry must be used when it will result in more effective, efficient or timely instruction. The schools should become comprehensive community institutions, so that their facilities, equipment, and vocational personnel are available on a 12-month basis. Schools should feature open entry/exit specific skills training and related knowledge for out-of-school youth and adults.

4. Vocational education is the principal element of a career education program, K-adulthood. Career development and education

is focused on individual choice throughout lifetime. The system must be responsive to such choices so no one is locked into a course of study or to a particular job. Vocational education should be the principal element of career education. It can emphasize attitude building with respect for work, as well as to enhance personal values in life. It is the principal provider of work competencies.

5. Leadership development to effect career education is essential. New approaches to developing career education leadership are needed for education administrators and industrial managers. Systems analyses techniques will be employed to use the best practices in industry and in public and private schools.

III. The Career Education Model

What follows are proposed components of a career education model based upon the foregoing objectives and goals:

1. Career education will replace general education. The general education curriculum will be restructered to focus its objectives on work as a way of life and also upon preparation for further study. Work orientation, prevocational preparation, student development, pre-technical education, cluster skills training, the development of work related attitudes and understandings, and supervised work experience will replace or change general education courses and move students into meaningful instruction and experiences that will make easier the transition to specific skills training or

to further education or training, including apprenticeship training. Continuous, effective, and individual vocational counselling and guidance will be an integral part of this more flexible curriculum.

2. Vocational education will give priority to special target groups. Whether they are referred to as disadvantaged or persons with special needs, special target populations will be given priority throughout this model. The vocational guidance and counselling, and placement efforts for these groups must be highly specialized and more individualized than in previous education programs.

3. Career education will begin in the elementary grades and continue throughout life. Attitude building, career orientation, vocational guidance and counselling, as well as exploratory activities, will begin as early as possible to enhance motivation for this world of work. Some specific skill exploration must start in the middle grades to acquaint students with machines, instruments, tools, equipment, and processes, so students can gain insights into operation, maintenance, safety, and processes in their quest for an occupational choice. Simple job cluster skills and related knowledge can be introduced in junior high school. As the student progresses through secondary and post-secondary programs of his choice, he will have alternative choices

for specific skills training, for job cluster skills training and related knowledge, for pre-vocational and pre-technical education, for advanced vocational and technical education, or any other education preparation he is capable of achieving. The overriding principle is to provide a system that will keep options open for greater individual choice.

4. Specific skill training will be available for all who choose it at the secondary, post-secondary, and adult levels. Highly relevant specific skills training and related knowledge must be continued at the secondary level as long as individuals choose such preparation. For a majority of youth, high school is their only opportunity to acquire specific job skills. Sufficient basic education must be given with skills to enhance the students' options for employment or further education and training. Career education keeps open the options to enter employment and to return to education throughout life.

5. Vocational education will make a greater impact at the post-secondary level. Special innovative efforts will be made to increase student involvement in vocational and technical programs. Student development (pre-technical education)programs must be initiated or expanded to be available at all post-secondary institutions to assist secondary school graduates or dropouts to insure their entry and successful completion of advanced vocational-technical education programs. This is especially true of minority group members who

now represent a very small fraction of technical education enrollments.

6. Adult vocational education will be emphasized to permit updating and upgrading of job skills, to insure continued employment, and to permit adults to make career changes. The adult must have opportunities to gain new skills, knowledge, and understandings to advance up the career ladder,or to move to other jobs, or into supervisory or managerial positions. Refresher training for updating job skills must be readily available.

7. Job placement and follow-up will be a continuing school function. Job placement will be part of planning, operations, and evaluation of all career education programs and schools will become a principal job placement institution in all communities. Cooperative training programs aid schools in assuming the placement function. Formal follow-up services will be an integral part of the delivery system.

8. Greater involvement of employers and private schools in providing vocational education will be evident. The goal will be to achieve a systematic involvement of these resources in vocational education with the caveat that the public school system will be responsible for administering the various components of an efficient delivery system. The public school administrator has a fiduciary relationship both to the tax payers and to the recipients of vocational education to provide the optimum mix of public and private facilities, equipment and know-how.

Career education requires the view of the total community, the laboratory, and removes the obsolescent position that vocational education can occur only in a public school. Expanded cooperative education programs will include innovative variations to maximize private school and industry involvement. They will train where schools are unable to do so, or where they can enhance the local vocational program. Private schools participation will give more flexibility in program operation and will help maximize individual choice. Certainly much of the skills training can be obtained on a purchase of services basis from private schools.

9. Leadership development for vocational personnel and teacher preparation and upgrading will be required. School administrators at all levels, and private industry officials, will be included as participants in leadership development for vocational personnel. A continuous effort is needed to bring all components of the proposed model into a successful career education program that can be replicated extensively.

10. Vocational education youth groups will be encouraged and their activities supported as an integral part of career education.

11. Effective and continuous evaluation is required. Socio-economic accountability and cost/benefit comparisons must be included.

12. Performance incentives will be utilized to help obtain the most beneficial results. Such incentives will be applied to the highest priority components of the model such as serving the target groups, being highly responsive to labor market needs, and for maximum involvement of private schools and employers in career education.

IV. Vocational Education Delivery System

To effect a new career education system, the present vocational education delivery system must be modified. Some legislative changes will be necessary for full implementation of this delivery system:

a. Targeted basic grants should be made to all States with a "pass through" to areas of urgent need, such as inner-cities and isolated rural areas. Such targeting will reflect full legislative intent so that change can be effected through the planning process.

b. Incentive grants should be made for unique or unusual efforts or progress, such as more effectively serving target populations, for making specific skill training more relevant in meeting labor market needs, for improved vocational counselling and guidance, for maximizing private school and private industry involvement, for innovative clustering of skills training, for meeting human needs in geographical areas not previously served and for vocational personnel development that is more responsive to these special needs areas. Incentive grants will be the principal delivery system to reform the present secondary and post-secondary

program. For example, specific encouragement must be provided to meet the needs of the residents of inner-cities or isolated areas. This may be done by taking the residents to programs that are not available in their neighborhood.

c. Federal package models will be another delivery mechanism. This envisions the USOE working directly with LEA's but in consultation with State departments of education, and other agencies or institutions, on a performance-contracting basis to attain the objectives of a career education program. Many of the criteria in the incentive grants may be used.